Lobster Trawl Groundline Line Study Video:
Observations and Measurements of the profiles of Various Configurations of Lobster Trawl Groundlines

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Video Abstract

Occasionally, whales become entangled with static fishing gear in Cape Cod Bay. In most cases, entanglement occurs with lobster pot groundlines within the National Marine Fisheries Service designated Cape Cod Bay Critical Habitat Area. The frequency of these situations threatens the continued survival of certain cetacean populations, such as the Right Whale, *Eubaelana glacialis*. Groundlines ensnare whales because traditionally, trawls were rigged with floating polypropylene lines. The video chronicles the elevation of such groundlines along the whole trawl. Clearly, the elevation of floating groundlines above the sea floor is unacceptable in this habitat due to the shallow bathymetry and population of diving whales which encounter the lines in the shallows. In the past fishermen have reluctantly used sinking groundline to avoid whale interactions with their gear. Fishermen find that the sinking line "hangs up" (gets caught) on bottom structures such as rocks and boulders, making retrieval of the gear difficult to impossible in some cases. The solution offered in the video is newer, neutrally buoyant groundlines which have very low elevations above the sea floor. SCUBA divers video and measure groundline heights above the seafloor on three different habitat types in this study for five different products. Through the use of video footage, it is easily proven that neutrally buoyant groundlines are a promising solution to the woes of Cape Cod Bay fishermen using sinking groundlines and to conservationists that seek to reduce whale entanglement. DMF Video Library Catalog #: 02MADMF754.